

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDA-12 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 AID-05 SY-05 SYE-00
OPR-02 A-01 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
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O R 121215Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9208
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4680

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE SY PINT PINS
SUBJ: REMARKS OF PHALANGE POLITBURO MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI
ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. EMBOFF MET MORNING OF AUGUST 12 WITH PHALANGE POLITBURO
MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI IN LATTER'S OFFICE IN ASHRAFIYAH.
PAKRADOUNI, WHO HAD MET AUGUST 11 WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS
AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS, SAID THE FOLLOWING.

2. THE PRESENT "CEASE-FIRE."

A. PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD SAID THE PRESENT CEASEFIRE
AGREEMENT CONTAINED ONLY FOLLOWING PROVISIONS:

--THE ARMED CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN WOULD WITHDRAW
FROM THE STREETS OF ASHRAFIYAH.

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--THE SYRIANS WOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE APPROXIMATELY TWELVE
POSITIONS THEY HAD IN EAST BEIRUT THAT WERE EAST OF
A LINE RUNNING NORTH-SOUTH ALONG SASSINE STREET AND
EXTENDING FROM THE HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL AREA TO THE
WATERFRONT. IN THIS REGARD, THREE KEY POSITIONS WERE
TO BE EVACUATED BY THE SYRIANS: TWO NEAR THE NLP

HEADQUARTERS AND ONE NEAR CAMILLE CHAMOUN'S HOUSE. THE SYRIANS WOULD ALSO WITHDRAW FROM QUARANTINA BRIDGE IN FAVOR OF LEBANESE GENDARMES OR OTHER ADF TROOPS. THE SYRIANS WOULD RE-DEPLOY THEIR FORCES TO POSITIONS WEST OF THE SASSINE LINE, INCLUDING THE RIZK TOWER.

--THE DISENGAGEMENT WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE OVERALL SOLUTIONS TO PRESENT SECURITY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

B. THE SYRIANS HAD AGREED TO THIS BARGAIN IN PART TO PLACATE CAMILLE CHAMOUN, IN PART TO PLEASE PRESIDENT SARKIS, AND IN PART BECAUSE IT REPRESENTED NO SIGNIFICANT MILITARY CONCESSIONS ON THEIR PART. BACHIR HAD AGREED BECAUSE HE NEEDED TIME TO REGROUP HIS FORCES. (PAKRADOUNI SAID THE PHALANGE HAD 400 FIGHTERS AND THE NLP 100 FIGHTERS IN EAST BEIRUT. DANY CHAMOUN HAS CLAIMED A TOTAL OF 6,000 FIGHTERS THERE. PAKRADOUNI IS PROBABLY UNDERESTIMATING AND DANY EXAGGERATING.)

C. THE CHRISTIANS WERE CLAIMING THE AGREEMENT CALLED FOR THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF SYRIANS FROM EAST BEIRUT. AS EXPLAINED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS, HOWEVER, THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE AND THE SYRIANS HAD IN NO WAY AGREED TO GIVE UP THE RIZK TOWER OR OTHER POSITIONS WEST OF THE SASSINE LINE. PAKRADOUNI COMMENTED THAT
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ONLY PRESIDENT SARKIS AND ADF COMMANDER SAMI KHATIB HAD CONTACTED THE SYRIANS DIRECTLY. AMINE GEMAYEL AND DANY CHAMOUN HAD DEALT WITH THE SYRIANS THROUGH SARKIS AND KHATIB.

D. THE SYRIANS HAD LIVED UP TO THEIR SIDE OF THE BARGAIN AND EVACUATED THEIR POSITIONS EAST OF THE SASSINE LINE, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOT YET EVACUATED QUARANTINA BRIDGE. BUT CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN HAD STARTED THE FIGHTING THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 11 WHEN THEY FIRED ON THE CHAYA BUILDING IN SOUTHERN ASHRAFIYAH. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT AS EXPLAINED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS, THE SYRIANS HAD A PERFECT RIGHT TO BE IN THIS BUILDING.

E. PAKRADOUNI SAID THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT AT BEST REPRESENTED A BRIEF BREATHING SPELL AND THAT COMBAT WAS CERTAIN TO CONTINUE. HE SAID THE BREATHING SPELL MIGHT LAST AS LONG AS A WEEK, BUT HE GUESSED THAT THE FIGHTING WOULD BEGIN AGAIN TONIGHT (AUGUST 12).

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3. POSITION OF THE PHALANGE.

A. PAKRADOUNI, WHO SAYS HE KNOWS BACHIR VERY WELL, STRESSED THE LATTER REMAINS ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO A VIOLENT SOLUTION. BACHIR KNOWS THAT HE IS IN CONSTANT DANGER OF ASSASSINATION. HE THINKS THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT HIMSELF IS TO CREATE A MARONITE STATE, ON ALL OR PART OF LEBANON, FORMALLY ALLIED WITH ISRAEL, IN WHICH HE WOULD CONTROL POWER. BACHIR BELIEVED THAT THE BEST WAY TO MOVE TOWARDS THIS OBJECTIVE WAS TO MAINTAIN A CONSTANT STATE OF TENSION BY FIRING ON THE SYRIANS SOLDIERS. ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT REALLY THOUGHT OUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS ACTIONS, BACHIR HOPED THAT SOMEHOW THE ISRAELIS WOULD INTERVENE IF THIS TENSION WERE MAINTAINED LONG ENOUGH.

B. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY USELESS TO ADVISE PIERRE OR BACHIR
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TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. PIERRE, DESPITE HIS SOMETIMES MODERATE STATEMENTS, SUPPORTED BACHIR. THE GREATER THE

DANGER TO BACHIR, THE GREATER PIERRE'S SUPPORT. THE ONLY EFFECTIVE WAY OF GETTING THE PHALANGE TO MODERATE ITS POSITON WAS THROUGH ISRAEL. IF THE ISRAELIS MADE PLAIN THEY WERE NOT COMING TO THE PHALANGE'S RESCUE, THERE WOULD BE A SOLUTION WITH THE SYRIANS "WITHIN THREE DAYS," PAKRADOUNI CLAIMED.

4. MILITARY SUPPLIES.

PAKRADOUNI SAID HE HAD SEEN THE FOLLOWING WEAPONS, WHICH HE PRESUMED BUT DID NOT KNOW CAME FROM ISRAEL. AROUND JULY 30 HE HAD SEEN TWO SUPER SHERMAN TANKS IN ASHRAFIYAH. HE WAS TOLD BY PEOPLE WHO MAINTAINED THEM THAT THERE WERE THREE OTHER TANKS WITH THESE TWO TANKS. ON AUGUST 11 KARIM HAD SEEN ONE SUPER SHERMAN TANK NEAR HAZMIYAH. KARIM'S BROTHER JEAN HAD RECENTLY SEEN TWO 4.2 INCH MORTARS IN FURN-ESH-CHEBBAK. THE MILITIAMEN HAD SAID THEY HAD VERY LITTLE AMMUNITION FOR THESE MORTARS. (BEGIN COMMENT: THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE HAD SOME SUPER SHERMAN TANKS SINCE AT LEAST 1976. END COMMENT.)

5. KAWKABA.

FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS, WHEN PAKRADOUNI SAW HIM, HAD SAID THE GOL WOULD LEAVE THE BATTALION IN KAWKABA IN PLACE FOR THE TIME BEING. THE BATTALION WOULD NEITHER WITHDRAW TO THE NORTH, NOR TRY TO ADVANCE TO TIBNIN.

6. SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH.

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PRESIDENT SARKIS TOLD PAKRADOUNI THAT FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH WOULD VISIT BAABDA PALACE ON AUGUST 14 AND WOULD BE STAYING IN BEIRUT AREA FOR 2 TO 3 DAYS. SARKIS HAD OFFERED TO LET FRANJIYAH SLEEP AT THE PALACE, BUT THE LATTER HAD REFUSED. SARKIS SPECULATED THAT FRANJIYAH WAS PREPARING A DRAMATIC GESTURE BY STAYING IN WEST BEIRUT WHILE HE WAS IN THE CAPITAL.
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